

15/01/24

**Application: Proposed development for full planning permission relating to Liverpool Street Station, Andaz Hotel (former Great Eastern Hotel), proposed development over the station and for works to the public realm.**

**LPA ID: 23/00453/FULEIA**

**Address: Site Bounded By 40 Liverpool Street, 50 Liverpool Street, Open Space from Liverpool Street (Hope Square) And Bishopsgate (Bishopsgate Square), And Sun Street Passage/Liverpool Street Bus Station At The Western Boundary London**

Dear Ms Nutt,

Thank you for consulting the Georgian Group on the above application for Planning Permission. Based on the information available to date, the Group forwards its objection to the proposed scheme for the reasons set out below.

### **Summary**

The application site is located within an area designated as being inappropriate for tall buildings in the City's Local Plan. The proposed development is therefore contrary to policy CS14(2) within the local plan, as well as policy D9(B) within the London Plan.

The location, height and massing of the proposed development would cause considerable harm to heritage assets of the highest importance. The harm to St Paul's is evident within views from Waterloo Bridge and the Golden Jubilee/Hungerford Bridge – both protected views within the London View Management Framework SPG. Whilst there would be further impact on protected views designated within the City's Local Plan.

The impact on the 18th and 19th century buildings within the Bishopsgate Conservation area would be considerable. This is particularly concerning in relation to St Botolph's Church and views towards this important heritage asset. In addition to this, Devonshire Square and New Street would have their setting, character and appearance negatively impacted owing to the scale of the proposed development. National and local policy is clear that harm to heritage assets and their setting should be avoided and where harm does exist this requires a clear and convincing justification and should be given the greatest weight in decision making.

The Georgian Group has serious concerns over this application for Planning Permission due to the harm that would be caused to heritage assets of the highest importance. The Group objects to this application and recommends your local authority refuse consent.

## Significance of Surrounding Heritage Assets

The Georgian Group's statutory remit includes buildings dating between 1700 and 1840 and it is only those buildings which I will highlight in our correspondence. For the impact on Liverpool Street Station itself, the Group defers to the expertise of our sister National Amenity Societies.

Celebrations to mark the tercentenary (2023) of the death of Sir Christopher Wren, architect of St Paul's, concluded at the end of 2023 and the landmark role that the cathedral's great dome and supporting drum have played in London's skyline for the past three centuries is of great public interest. St Paul's Cathedral is Wren's masterpiece, and its dome became his obsession. As part of plans to repair and rejuvenate Old St Paul's, before its destruction in The Great Fire, Wren proposed the introduction of a new domed crossing to the medieval building. The idea of the dome ran through all his subsequent designs for the new cathedral and was finally executed in the form we see today. Ever since its completion, St Paul's has dominated London's skyline and has both provided the stage for great national events and been depicted in innumerable works of art.

The role and contribution St Paul's Cathedral makes to the London skyline is recognised within the London View Management Framework, however views towards the great building are not only confined to those specific positions. St Paul's is visible from numerous other locations and notable landmarks, especially along the southern bank of the Thames, which all contribute to the significance of St Paul's Cathedral.

St Botolph-without-Bishopsgate is a grade II\* listed building designed by James Gould and George Dance Snr in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Dance went on to become Clerk of Works for the City of London and thus had effective control of architectural changes within the City. The body of the church and its tower are well preserved, with the eastern elevation and arched window framed by pairs of Doric pilasters supporting the pediment of particular interest. This impressive composition holds a prominent position on Bishopsgate and is visible in longer views enhancing the surrounding streetscape and wider Bishopsgate Conservation Area. Views of the tower and lantern against a clear skyline from along Bishopsgate contribute to the significance of the church, as well as the historic character of the conservation area reflecting what would have historically been its most prominent building.

The Bishopsgate Conservation Area is of a particular interest showing notable examples of Georgian town planning with later developments of the Victorian and Edwardian period woven in. Views within the conservation make a strong contribution towards its distinctive character and inform us of the unique building stock within the environs. The *Bishopsgate Conservation Area SPD* sets out these views which include notable buildings dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries along with historic street patterns surviving from the period.

The group of late 18<sup>th</sup> century warehouses on New Street and to the eastern side of Devonshire Square create a distinctive character and appearance within this portion of the Bishopsgate Conservation Area. Constructed for the East India Company in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries they were later used by the Port of London Authority in 1909 and then converted for office use in the 1970s. Views down New Street looking east are referenced within the SPD for Bishopsgate as contributing to its special interest. When positioned here, the ability to appreciate the former character and historic scale of the area is clear and of particular note. Similarly, when situated within, and to the east of Devonshire Square, the ability to read the historic scale of this section of the

conservation area is important and a contributing factor towards the special interest of the area.

The wider conservation area has distinct sections of a consistent scale and height with few buildings departing from this. This allows for prominent views within the conservation area and for the historic character and appearance to be read and appreciated when moving around the historic street patterns.

## **Proposal**

The proposals for Planning Permission include the redevelopment of Liverpool Street Station including the demolition of 50 Liverpool Street; Alterations and change of use to Great Eastern Hotel; development over Liverpool Street Station and 40 Liverpool Street Station which will rise to a height of 108.6 metres excluding roof top plant. Further details on the proposals are set out on the City of London's planning portal.

## **Proposals and Their Impact**

### St Paul's Cathedral

Owing to the height and massing of the proposed development there would be harm caused to the setting and significance of St Paul's Cathedral. This harm is evident within views from Waterloo Bridge and the Golden Jubilee/Hungerford Bridge – both protected views within the London View Management Framework SPG.

The London View Management Framework SPG sets out the importance of view 15 River Prospect: Waterloo Bridge as well as the guidelines for development within the setting of this view. View 15B is facing downstream with St Paul's Cathedral a key landmark which draws the eye of viewers crossing the bridge. Within this view St Paul's is clearly separated from the eastern and northern clusters, whilst the drum, peristyle, and dome distinguishable against a clear skyline. These elements contribute to the setting and significance of St Paul's.

The proposed development as shown within the submitted TVIA would be visible when viewing St Paul's Cathedral along Waterloo Bridge. The height and massing of the proposed towers topping Liverpool Street Station would be of such a scale as to be harmful to the setting of St Paul's and contrary to the management guidance set out within the LVMF SPG. Pages 97 to 124 of the TVIA (views 8-14) show the impact of the development on the silhouette of St Paul's. The LVMF, in reference to view 15B, states that development should not dominate the peristyle, drum, dome, or western towers and that development should maintain the separation from the eastern and northern clusters. Views 8-11 show the harmful impact the development would have on the viewers ability to clearly distinguish the drum, western towers and peristyle owing to the height and massing of the development in the backdrop of these elements. Views 13 and 14 show the harmful impact the development would have on the existing separation of St Paul's Cathedral from the eastern cluster.

It is possible to view St Paul's as the dominant building on the City Skyline from along the Golden Jubilee/Hungerford Footbridges and designated within the LVMF view 17B1 and B2. Within the LVMF SPG it makes clear that St Paul's Cathedral is the single most important structure in this view and its setting should be preserved or enhanced. Views 3 and 5 of the TVIA show the harmful impact the positioning and height of the development would have on the setting of St Paul's. Its dominance would be reduced and the separation from the eastern cluster reduced and blurred. View 4 of the TVIA

similarly shows this effect whilst additional harmful impact would be caused owing to the positioning of the development behind the pediment above the southern porch. This would reduce the ability of the viewer to distinguish the silhouette of St Paul's against a clear skyline.

View 19 within the TVIA shows the impact of the proposed development on the existing separation between the eastern cluster and St Paul's. This separation is vital in maintaining the prominence of St Paul's in views from the southern bank of the River Thames. View 16B within the LVMF allows the viewer to appreciate St Paul's within its wider setting. An important component and contributor to this wider setting is St Mary Le Bow, constructed in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and designed by Christopher Wren. The Spire is prominent within this view and its visual and historic relationship with St Paul's is important and a key element. The proposed development would obscure the visibility of St Mary Le Bow's spire and in doing so would harm the relationship between St Paul's and the building – both designed by Sir Christopher Wren.

The Group has highlighted the harmful impact of two further applications for Planning Permission on the setting of St Paul's Cathedral to the City of London. Firstly, 55 and 65 Old Broad Street which would be visible along Waterloo bridge, harming the setting and visibility of the peristyle of St Paul's – contrary to LVMF guidance. This application has recently been approved by the City of London's Planning Committee. It would increase the cumulative impact on St Paul's Cathedral. Secondly, the live application at 55 Bishopsgate. This would reduce the separation between the eastern cluster and St Paul's, diminishing its prominence on the London Skyline and harming its significance.

The proposed development would cause harm to the significance of St Paul's Cathedral through the impact on its setting. The level of harm for the purposes of the NPPF would be at the middle to higher level of less than substantial harm.

### St Botolph's Church

The setting of St Botolph's church contributes considerably to its significance. The church holds a prominent position on Bishopsgate, featuring in short and long views, giving it a landmark quality. The height and massing of the proposed development would have a harmful impact on the setting of the church, all but removing the prominence of the church in views along Bishopsgate and the historical relationship between this road and the church.

Views 47, 48 and 49 show the harmful impact of the development on the setting of St Botolph's Church. At present the tower and lantern of the church appear against a clear skyline which enhances the setting of the church and its prominence. When the proposed development is factored in, this prominence is completely removed due to the height and massing of the proposed towers. This impact would cause considerable harm to the significance of the church and to the wider significance of the streetscape.

The cumulative impact on the setting of St Botolph's Church of this development and the recently approved application at 55 and 65 Old Broad Street will have to be considered when deciding this application. The development there will again harm the setting of the church from views looking west from One Bishopsgate Plaza. If both applications are permitted, then the preeminence of St Botolph's Church within the surrounding streetscape will be all but lost.

## Bishopsgate Conservation Area

Specific views within the Bishopsgate Conservation Area contribute considerably towards its significance and allow its special character and appearance to be appreciated. The proposed development would have a negative impact on a number of these important views which would harm the significance of the conservation area. Reference to the harmful impact on St Botolph's Church above similarly applies to the Bishopsgate Conservation Area in which it is located. The church has a prominent position on Bishopsgate and contributes considerably to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The new development would compete visually with the church and the height and massing would all but remove the landmark quality of the tower and lantern. This would cause considerable harm to the significance of the conservation area due to the negative impact the towers would have on the historic and visual relationship between the church, Bishopsgate, and wider streetscape. This impact is clear in views 47, 48 and 49 of the TVIA.

New Street is an important section of the conservation area within which its late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century character can be experienced. Formerly Hand Alley, it later became New Street in 1782 with 5,6 and 7 New Street surviving from this period. These dwellings form an important group and contribute to the streetscape and views down this street. No. 12 Magpie Public House dates to 1830 and sits on the northern side of the street forming a consistent scale of buildings with later warehouses. The southern side of the street is home to the former East India Company and later Port of London Authority Warehouse buildings which create a unique character with the buildings on the northern side. The consistent rooflines and scale of the buildings adds to this, whilst illustrating the development that occurred in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The proposed development would be situated at the end of New Street replacing the sensitively designed late 20<sup>th</sup> century eastern entrance to Liverpool Street Station. The scale and height of the development would introduce an incongruous element to views down New Street. This view allows you to appreciate the character of the conservation area and is rightly recognised as a contributing view within the SPD. The impact is shown within views 39 and 40 of the TVIA.

Devonshire Square was laid out between 1678 and 1708 and is an example of an early formal square surviving in the area. Buildings surrounding the square have been altered but still contribute to the sense of enclosure associated with a formal square. No. 12 and 13 are notable examples of early 18<sup>th</sup> century townhouses whilst the former East India Company warehouses to the east show a different building use and the expansion of their operations occurring during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This section of the conservation area contributes considerably to the character of the area and allows the viewer to see the historical development of the square and wider area. Views play a vital role in this contribution, allowing the historic scale and appearance to be appreciated. Views 41, 42 and 43 within the TVIA show the harmful impact the development would have on this section of the conservation area. The height and massing would dominate the views within the square and harm the setting of the former warehouses which are the dominant building in scale and historic use.

The proposed development would harm three separate sections of the conservation area which illustrate the development occurring within the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The character and appearance of these sections are visible and contribute to the wider significance of the Bishopsgate Conservation Area. This harm caused for the purposes of the NPPF is at the middle to higher level of less than substantial harm.

## **Policy and Guidance**

Sections 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 makes it a statutory duty for decision makers to have special regard to desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings. Section 72 of the Act states that special attention must be paid to desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of appearance of conservation areas.

Guidance on carrying out this statutory duty is set out by the Government within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 205 states that 'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'. Any harm caused to the significance of a designated heritage asset will need a clear and convincing justification for doing so in line with paragraph 206 of the NPPF.

Planning practice guidance set out by the government requires any harm identified to either be classified as less than substantial or substantial harm. If the harm is identified as less than substantial, then in line with paragraph 208 of the NPPF this harm should be weighed against the public benefits associated with the proposed scheme.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that 'where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise'.

London Plan Policy HC1 states 'development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings should also be actively managed.'

Policies HC3 and HC4 of the London Plan relate to local and strategic views, as well as the LVMF. Policy HC4 states that 'Development in the foreground, middle ground and background of a designated view should not be intrusive, unsightly or prominent to the detriment of the view' and makes clear that development should not harm those protected views set out within the plan.

Policy D9 Tall Buildings within the London Plan requires Development Plans to define what is considered a tall building and for local authorities to determine where they are appropriate and where they are not. It goes on to states that 'Tall buildings should only be developed in locations that are identified as suitable in Development Plans'. The policy in relation to heritage assets states that 'proposals should take account of, and avoid harm to, the significance of London's heritage assets and their settings. Proposals resulting in harm will require clear and convincing justification, demonstrating that alternatives have been explored and that there are clear public benefits that outweigh that harm. The buildings should positively contribute to the character of the area'.

The City of London is currently consulting on the draft City Plan 2040 with key changes being implemented for tall buildings and how they relate to the heritage assets. Strategic Policy S12: Tall Buildings sets five criterion which tall buildings must have regard to. This includes the effect on the City Skyline, the wider London Skyline and historic

skyline features, the character and amenity of their surroundings and the significance of heritage assets and their immediate and wider settings. The draft City Plan provides a policy map showing where tall buildings would be appropriate, which is a requirement set out within the London Plan.

The City of London's Local Plan Core Strategic Policy CS12 sets out the City's objective to 'To conserve or enhance the significance of the City's heritage assets and their settings, and provide an attractive environment for the City's communities and visitors'. Policy CS13 states the City's objective to 'protect and enhance significant City and London views of important buildings, townscape and skylines, making a substantial contribution to protecting the overall heritage of the City's landmarks'. Core Strategic Policy CS14 states that in relation to tall buildings, that planning permission will be refused if they are located within inappropriate areas such as; the St Paul's Heights Area and the St Paul's protect vista viewing corridors. Within the same policy, consideration will also be given to 'the potential effect on the City skyline; the character and amenity of their surroundings, including the relationship with existing tall buildings; the significance of heritage assets and their settings; and the effect on historic skyline features'.

LVMF SPG provides management guidelines to follow for view 15B stating at paragraph 266 that 'consideration should be given to the space St Paul's Cathedral requires between it and tall buildings not maintain its visual prominence in the river prospect'. Furthermore, at paragraph 267 it states that 'Development should not dominate the peristyle, drum, dome or western towers of St Paul's Cathedral in the background of the view. Development that visually interacts with the dome in the immediate background should not diminish the viewer's ability to recognise and appreciate the Strategically important Landmark.

With reference to view 17B, the LVMF SPG states that 'the setting of St Paul's Cathedral within the view, as the singular most important structure, should be preserved or enhanced'.

### **The Georgian Group's Comments**

The proposed development is classified as a tall building in line with the definition set out in the draft City Plan 2040. There are certain criteria which must be considered when a tall building is proposed, and only specific areas are appropriate. The City Local Plan 2015 designates the application site as inappropriate for a tall building, with a similar designation being applied to the site within the draft City Local Plan 2040. Liverpool Street Station and the application site sit outside of the designated City Cluster Tall Buildings Area. Policy D9 of the London Plan states that 'Tall buildings should only be developed in locations that are identified as suitable in Development Plans'.

It is the Group's view that the harm caused to St Paul's Cathedral would be at the middle to higher end of the less than substantial harm spectrum. The harm relates to the reduction in clear skyline to the eastern cluster and the ability to clearly distinguish the peristyle, drum, dome, and western towers of St Paul's from designated views. Consideration will need to be given to the cumulative impact of surrounding developments which, in the Group's view would cause harm to the setting and significance of St Paul's Cathedral.

The harm to St Botolph's Church is more close range and would challenge the prominence of the church along Bishopsgate. This harm would be at the middle to higher end of the less than substantial harm spectrum owing to the development

challenging the landmark quality of the church within the Bishopsgate Conservation Area and its immediate environs.

Bishopsgate Conservation Area is centred around the historic Bishopsgate Road which has historic streets and alleys running off it. The harm caused to the significance of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century development within the Bishopsgate Conservation Area would be at the middle to higher level of the less than substantial spectrum. This harm arises from the visibility of the proposed development from various points within the conservation area and the negative impact this would have on the unique character of the area.

### **Recommendation**

The Georgian Group objects to this application for Planning Permission.

In determining this application, you should bear in mind the statutory duties contained in section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess; section 72(1) of the Act to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas; and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the application.

Yours sincerely,

Eddie Waller (Conservation Adviser for London and the South East)